

Patrick Joseph O'Shea
VE3FW
1881 — 1972

The dean of all Ontario hams, if not all Canadian hams is a Silent Key. Pat O'Shea - VE3FW passed away February 18, 1972.

Born in Athlone, Ireland in 1881, he served in the Boer War and was a veteran at the age of 19. Here was the start of a life-long hobby of Communications. Pat served as a Signaller at this early date. In 1908 he emigrated to the Dominion and to Fort William in 1914. He was engaged in the newspaper business, enjoying a long career as a press foreman with various Canadian newspapers, with the majority of services with the Fort William Times-Journal.

However, we have to feel, perhaps selfishly, that Pat's greatest contribution to Canadiana was via his hobby—Ham Radio. VE3FW first appeared on the scene in 1925 and was a going concern since. For about a year and a half, Pat was the Acting Radio Inspector for this area, until a full time Inspector (A. C. Powley) was assigned in 1931.

On April 14, (*I believe that should read 17, Jim VE3UA*) 1934, Pat was Chairman at the initial meeting of the Canadian Lakehead Wireless Experimenters and was elected President at that same meeting. He served as president until 1936, being succeeded by John Fieldhouse - VE3FQ.

Even the hostilities of 1939-45 did not curtail his radio activities. Pat was an instructor in Morse code and radio operating for the Armed Forces and was one of the few to keep his fist in during the war. The first meeting of the Club after the War was held on November 21, 1945 and VE3FW was in attendance as usual, and one of the first things Pat always did was to volunteer to teach code to beginners.

On November 21, 1951, VE3FW was awarded Life Membership in the Lakehead Amateur Radio Club, with an engraved pin and later a certificate. In 1970, the Radio Society of Ontario honoured Pat with the only Honorary Life Membership in that organization.

Duty called again in September 1954 when he was elected to the Vice Presidency and (still later) from 1956 to '58 was again President (at the age of 75 years). He was also the Communications Officer with the Civil Defence Organization until 1960.

Always the perfect Irish gentleman, P. J. O'Shea was well known from coast to coast for his on-the-air manners and was famed for his flair for constantly changing rigs every few years. At one time or another he had tried most manufacturers' products, having given up home-brew a few years back. For the past six years, VE3FW was active from a retirement home in Dundas, active on 40, 80 and sometimes 20 Metres SSB.

Today, there are many hams, and indeed professional electronics people who owe their beginnings to that little bit of Ireland who has left us, but left behind a great legacy in the history of Canadian Amateur Radio.

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The funeral for Pat O'Shea was held on February 22, 1972 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Thunder Bay. Pall bearers were:

Frank Start - VE3AJ,
Les Harris - VE3AYZ,
Brien O'Brien - VE3UA,
Bert Lambert - VE3BKY,
Ray Forslund - VE3EDZ; and
Vic Bel - VE3ECV.

From March 1972 High-Q, Bill Klemacki - VE3EEW Editor

Note: The April 1973 High-Q reports that, effective February 18, 1973, the use of Club call VE3ZCD was discontinued in favour of VE3FW in memory of our first President, Pat O'Shea.